



State of New Hampshire
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health Services



VECTOBAC

(Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis)

What is VECTOBAC?

VECTOBAC is a larvicide that can kill mosquitoes during the larval stage of development. It contains a naturally occurring bacteria (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*) that is common in soils in the United States and throughout the world. VECTOBAC has been used since the 1950s for insect control, particularly for mosquitoes, black flies, and fungus gnats.

How does VECTOBAC work?

To control mosquito larvae, granules or briquettes of VECTOBAC are placed in standing water areas where mosquitoes breed, such as storm water and drainage systems (catch basins), marine and coastal areas, ponds, pool covers, large puddles, and discarded automobile tires. This bacteria damages the gut of the mosquito larvae when they eat it, causing the larvae to starve to death. A briquette is the solid block of VECTOBAC that releases concentrated larvicide for weeks to months.

Is VECTOBAC harmful to human beings?

No. There are no reports of serious acute or chronic effects of VECTOBAC from inhalation, but mild skin and eye irritation have been reported from direct contact with this agent. Eating plants or drinking water exposed to VECTOBAC has not been shown to produce any ill effects in humans.

How safe is VECTOBAC for the environment?

The bacterium contained in VECTOBAC occurs naturally in the soil and is harmless to mammals. It may be toxic to moths, butterflies, certain beetles, and some flies. It may be toxic to freshwater fish, but additional research needs to be done to confirm this. More data need to be collected regarding the effects of VECTOBAC on birds and other non-mosquito insects.

Is it safe for children and pets to play in areas that have been treated with VECTOBAC?

Mild skin and eye irritation can occur with direct contact, and it is best to keep children and pets away from areas that have been treated. However, since it will mostly be placed in storm drains and catch basins, children and pets will generally not have access to areas where VECTOBAC has been placed.

Am I likely to be exposed to VECTOBAC?

No. These larvicides are being applied in storm drains, catch basins, and other areas to which the general public does not have access. These areas drain into river water and sewage treatment plants.

Can I use this VECTOBAC product around my home?

No. VECTOBAC can only be applied by licensed applicators.

What should I do if I am exposed to VECTOBAC?

If you experience eye or skin irritation as a result of exposure to VECTOBAC, irrigate the eyes with tap water for 20 minutes and wash the skin thoroughly with soap and water. If the symptoms persist, first contact your local doctor or emergency department, then contact the New Hampshire Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

For more information about potential health effects from exposure to pesticides, such as VECTOBAC, please call the NH Department of Health and Human Services, Environmental and Occupational Health Section at 1-800-852-3345, extension 4664, or 1-603-271-4664.

For more information about West Nile virus, call the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, West Nile Virus Information line 1-866-273-NILE (6453)